

A JOINT PRESENTATION BY
THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION & ISLAMIA MEDIA

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PRAYER

● FOR BEGINNERS ●

BATOOL AL-TOMA



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Preface

Praise be to Allah, you have chosen Islam to be your way of life. Now you would naturally like to start learning and practising Islam in your daily life, as much as you can. The first and most important step on this path is that you start performing Prayers.

This book, accompanied by an audio tape, has been prepared for just that purpose: to support you as you embark on this process of learning and performing Prayers. They have been compiled from the very important Islamic viewpoint: that nothing that Islam requires you to learn or practise is difficult. Indeed everything should facilitate the fulfilment of your daily life, enhancing its value and joy, rather than become an obstacle or a burden for you. They have been compiled also with mindful consideration of the experiences expressed by those who, on embarking on their chosen journey into Islam, have found some of the available literature particularly confusing and overburdening at this important transitional stage.

These guidelines, we hope, will assist you towards understanding the meaning of Prayer, its form and significance as well as learning how to perform it. Once you have accepted and declared your faith – Islam – your concern must be to purify and develop both your heart and your behaviour. This is a continuous and lifelong process. It is achieved by making everything you do in life an act of worship: eating, drinking, the physical relationship with your spouse, earning a livelihood, friendships. It is easy. You do everything for the sake of *Allah* alone, avoiding those things which He dislikes,

things which you would naturally be ashamed of. Prayers help you to make your everyday life a life of worship, without disturbing your normal activities.

While we hope that this provision will be a great help, it is important for you to seek out regular contacts during which learning opportunities will present themselves as you come to know and interact more with the Muslims in your area. Attending the congregational Prayers in the local Mosque should be highly useful for this purpose. By watching, listening and joining in, you can enjoy the blessings of communal worship as well as develop your skills and confidence. Never be deterred when you feel the need to ask 'How, when, where or why?'; sincere Muslims will value your questions and be thankful for an opportunity to help. To learn is a virtue as much as it is an aid towards self development.

As you perhaps know by now, Muslims are required to learn and recite their Prayers in Arabic, and according to a given sequence. Though at first glance it may look substantial, in reality the extent of what has to be remembered is little, as there is considerable repetition throughout the Prayer. To Pray in Arabic is not only to use the language through which Allah has communicated with us, but it also brings with it a unifying dimension as Muslims throughout the world Pray in exactly the same manner and in the same language.

Some of the most important factors are highlighted here. The main purpose of the Prayer is to take you away, for a few moments, from your routine activities, to remember Allah and spend some time in your Lord's presence. To be conscious of this fact, together with millions of other Muslims, is sufficient for you to acquire the spiritual blessings of the Prayer.

That you understand both what you are saying and what you are doing is most important. Therefore:

- (i) Start with the essentials.
- (ii) Keep them simple and correct.
- (iii) Learn a little more, regularly, if possible.

The New Muslims Project would like to express sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude to all those who took the time to read the manuscript, offered suggestions for its improvement and helped bring it to its final stage of publication. We are especially grateful to Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jude, Director of the Islamic Research Centre, Leeds who, in his capacity as member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research, read the manuscript and advised on matters of fiqh. A special note of thanks for his gentle advice in this, and his unflinching support for the New Muslims Project generally, must go to our dear departed Dr Khuram Murad who would wish only that you remember him in your Prayers.

Ena'ol Al-Toma

New Muslims Project

The Islamic Foundation

Introduction to Prayer in Islam

SALĀH

Salah or Prayer is the second of the five pillars of Islam after **Shahāda** – to testify to the oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muḥammad (PBUH). The other three are: **Zakah** – an obligatory charge on your wealth paid annually for those in need; **Sawm** – fasting during the month of *Ramadan*, and **Hajj** – making the pilgrimage to Makka (if it is within your means). However, just as a building does not consist only of four walls, Islam does not exist on these five pillars alone but is a complete way of life encompassing all aspects of the spiritual, moral and physical well-being of humankind.

The first pillar – **Shahāda**, that is to testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad (PBUH) is His Messenger – is the pivot around which the whole of Islam revolves. The second – mandatory daily Prayers – is the most direct way of communicating with Allah, of establishing and nourishing that personal relationship with your Lord and Sustainer, without which you cannot be a good Muslim.

Prayer is the most direct way of communicating with Allah, of establishing and nourishing that personal relationship with your Lord and Sustainer

The Arabic word *Salāh* is a wide and comprehensive term which cannot be adequately translated by the English term Prayer. *Salāh*, while it embodies the concepts of supplication, petition and invocation implied in the English term 'Prayer', is much more than this.

Prayer in Islam is not merely a series of words and movements practised occasionally, or even regularly, without much thought as to its meaning or purpose. Rather it is a comprehensive form of communication with Allah which, if it is 'established' in the heart, brings the desired results and ties the individual and the community to their Lord in a fruitful and positive way. It awakens your heart to your Lord and becomes the practical expression of your love for your Creator. Withdrawing from the mundane matters of life, and turning towards Allah, knowing that He is not only listening but responding to each worshipper, creates a warm, cherished feeling within, knowing that the love shown to your Creator is reciprocated seven hundred fold.

There are no shows of extravagance connected to the performance of Prayer. It is a simple and humbling exercise prior to which you are requested to observe some basic aspects of cleanliness and purity, referred to as ablution or *Wudū*. The Prayer, once it is truly understood, gives an infinite strength to live by the will of Allah, to abstain from what He dislikes and to deal with the trials of life with commitment and confidence in Him. It can be the best consolation and means of encouragement during times of stress and anxiety.

The Qur'an continuously encourages the observance of Prayer:

And be steadfast in Prayer and give in charity; and whatever good you send ahead of you for your souls you shall find it with Allah: for Allah sees all that you do.

(*Sūrah* 2: 110)

Guard strictly your Prayers, especially the middle Prayer, and stand before Allah in a devout manner.

(*Sūrah* 2: 238)

Great importance is attached to the conscious observance of the Prayer as it is the first thing about which you will be questioned and held accountable for on the Day of Judgement.

There is abundant evidence in the Qur'an that Prayer was a requirement and was practised in some form or another by the earlier Prophets and their followers, as an essential part of their relationship with Allah. Prophet Abraham (PBUH) sought Allah's grace and support in his efforts to establish Prayer among his people:

My Lord, make me establish regular Prayer, and make my offspring do likewise. My Lord, accept my supplication.

(*Sūrah* 14: 40)

Allah spoke to Prophet Moses (PBUH), saying:

Verily I am Allah, there is no god but I, so serve Me only and perform Prayer for the remembrance of Me.

(*Sūrah* 20: 14)

Prayer is the first thing about which you will be questioned and held accountable for on the Day of Judgement

Prophet Jesus (PBUH) said of his Lord:

And He made me blessed wherever I may be, and He enjoined upon me Prayer and Almsgiving as long as I live.

(Surah 19: 31)

In the same way the instruction to Pray was reaffirmed in the Qur'an to become the cornerstone of the mission of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

And recite. (O Prophet), what is sent of the Book to you, and perform regular Prayer: for Prayer restrains from shameful and evil deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest thing in life without doubt. And Allah knows the deeds that you do.

(Surah 29: 45)

Prayer, therefore, is a key to several different treasures. It is a means of remembering Allah, our Creator and the Source of everything which surrounds us; it is a means through which we seek His help and guidance so that our lives will be more fruitful here and in the Hereafter, as we strive to live according to His will; it is a time to ask for forgiveness from Allah for our faults and to sincerely thank Him for the treasures He has provided us with and for the bounties we have received, both material and spiritual.

New Beginnings

You have just recited your *Shahada* – testifying to the Oneness of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH) thereby entering the fold of Islam. It is now necessary that you perform *Ghusl* – take a full shower.

This is an act of purification which you should attend to as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

In the meantime those other Muslims present who have just witnessed this joyous occasion are inviting you to join them for the Prayer. It is understandable that you may not be familiar with the Prayer and its requirements at this stage and therefore feel a little apprehensive – however this is an important learning experience the observance of which should not be missed.

Since this is a communal Prayer, the *Imam*, by leading it, takes on the responsibility of the Prayer for the rest of the worshippers. The worshippers should not make any movement ahead of the *Imam*, nor should they anticipate any of his movements but together, as a unified congregation, they follow his movements which are (with one exception) preceded by the words *Allahu Akbar* – 'Allah is Greatest' – until the final *Salam* to his right and then left shoulder which concludes the Prayer.

For some time, when the time for the Prayer arrives, because you are new to Islam you may find yourself in the same predicament. Prepare yourself for Prayer by first performing ablution – *Wudu'*. Then simply follow the movement procedure of the Prayer. You may remember and praise Allah by using simple phrases which you find easy to recall such as *Allahu Akbar* – 'Allah is Greatest', *Subhan Allah* – 'Glory to Allah', *Al-Hamdulillah* – 'All Praise is due to Allah' and complete the movement sequence to the end. You may feel the need to hold a guide to Prayer in your hand or listen to a recording of the Prayer, repeating as you hear the words. In time you will be able to memorise and recall the entire procedure.

***Ghusl* is an act of purification which you should attend to as soon as the opportunity presents itself.**

We hope that by reading on, these guidelines will help you towards achieving that goal.

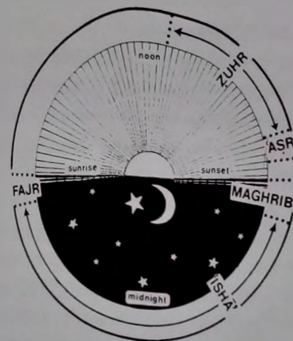
The Obligatory or *Fard* Prayers

It is preferable that we first understand, learn and feel confident with the obligatory or *Fard* Prayers of which there are five. These are performed at different intervals during the day:

1. **Fajr** or Dawn Prayer – performed between the break of dawn and the approach of sunrise.
2. **Zuhr** or Noon Prayer – performed from just past mid-day until mid-afternoon.
3. **Asr** or Afternoon – performed from mid-afternoon to the approach of sunset.
4. **Maghrib** or Sunset – performed immediately after sunset and before darkness falls.
5. **Isha'** or Night Prayer – performed from after dark until just before dawn.

Because the Prayer times relate to the earth's position to the sun, they constantly change throughout the year. They also vary according to where in the world you are living. These guidelines therefore together with the following diagram are general. For accuracy it is best to secure a Prayer time-table from a Muslim friend or a local Mosque.

This diagram, we hope, will help you to ascertain the approximate time for each Prayer.



Timings of Daily Prayers

The Time to Perform Prayers

It is necessary and important that Prayers are performed within the time allowed and according to your own or the community's convenience. All Prayers are preferred to be performed at the beginning of their time except the night Prayer – *Isha'*, which is preferred to be Prayed at its later time or before retiring to bed. It is not desirable to delay the Prayer deliberately through neglect and apathy, which clearly reflects a person's attitude towards Allah. Try never to miss the Prayer altogether.

The collective Prayer, in the Mosque, may be delayed in order that the maximum number of people may participate, e.g. in the case of the dawn Prayer during summer, or the noon Prayer during winter being delayed to the optimum lunch-time slot of one o'clock for

It is not desirable to delay the Prayer deliberately through neglect and apathy, which clearly reflects a person's attitude towards Allah. Try never to miss the Prayer altogether

Because the Prayer times relate to the earth's position to the sun, they constantly change throughout the year. They also vary according to where in the world you are living

University students or those who are working so that they may Pray in their lunch break.

Where to Perform the Prayer

Performance of the Prayer requires no special place or building. The only requirement is that the area chosen should be clean and free from impurities, in the same way as the body must be free from anything regarded as impure and which would require you to renew your ablution – *Wudu*. Consequently, persons who are away from their homes, travelling or working, may Pray wherever they are: in a quiet, convenient or even designated area in the workplace, the park, the railway station or the airport. It is always preferable that you choose an area where you do not disturb or cannot easily be disturbed by others.

You can also Pray inside a moving vehicle in the sitting position if you cannot get out of the vehicle within the allowed time for the Prayer. Similarly in the event of illness, pregnancy, disability, exhaustion or merely tiredness, you can Pray sitting or lying down. If you are able, you must make symbolic gestures with the head, eyes, hand or finger comparable to that of the movement sequence in the Prayer.

The Direction of Prayer – *Qibla*

Muslims, wherever they may be, are required to face towards the *Ka ba* in *Makka* to Pray. This is an essential condition, which, if not met, makes the Prayer invalid. This direction is called *Qibla*. The *Ka ba* is the first house on earth built for the worship of Allah alone. It is thus a symbol of monotheism or *Tawhid* in Islam and also of the

unity of the mission of all the Prophets of Allah, as much as it symbolises the unity of the Muslim community.

Muslims, therefore, Pray neither to the East (as is commonly believed) nor to the West but to Allah alone in the direction of the *Qibla*, which every Muslim must endeavour to ascertain. For those with a good sense of direction, this can be sought through knowledge of the movement of the sun, moon and stars. It is more commonly defined however by the use of a compass.

From the UK the direction of the *Qibla* is South East. If you find yourself in a place where you simply do not know the direction of the *Qibla*, then choose the direction, using your best judgement, and Pray leaving the rest to Allah. When Praying inside a moving vehicle in the sitting position obviously you will have to Pray towards the direction you are travelling. It is best however, to partially turn your body or at least your head in the direction of the *Qibla*, if it is known to you, for part or all of the Prayer. At times like this Allah knows full well your intention as well as your difficulties and circumstances and He is all-Knowing and all-Forgiving. Keep in mind that it is always necessary to Pray whatever the circumstances and, though you may be unable to face towards it or locate it, in your heart you must have this sense of direction towards the *Qibla*.

What to Wear

When preparing to meet someone you know and respect as a friend, or responding to an invitation to meet a dignitary or someone in a position of authority, you take care to dress properly. Similarly, when performing the Prayer before Allah, you should dress in a fitting and decent manner.

Muslims, wherever they may be, are required to face towards the Ka ba in Makka to Pray. This is an essential condition, which, if not met, makes the Prayer invalid. This direction is called Qibla

Performance of the Prayer requires no special place or building. The only requirement is that the area chosen should be clean and free from impurities

Your clothing does not have to be any different from that which you normally wear. Whatever you wear, it will be considered acceptable by Islamic teachings, provided it is decent and respectable and that it is clean. The minimum requirement for men to be able to perform Prayer before Allah is that they should be covered from the navel to the knees. A woman's whole body should be covered for the Prayer except the face, hands and feet, which she is not required to cover.

Shoes are always removed when Prayers are performed inside so that the Prayer area remains clean. For this reason also you will notice that Muslims generally remove their shoes when entering the Mosque and their own or the homes of other Muslims.

Many items, such as Prayer mats, beads and specific garments have come to be looked upon as essential requirements for Prayer. In truth, these things have come about as part of Islamic culture and associated community traditions have developed historically. Male headgear, which was worn by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from time to time, may be worn but is not an essential requirement for Prayer. Finally, whatever you may find to put on or whatever you are wearing, you should Pray rather than miss the Prayer due to improper dress, unless it is soiled with impurities.

... when
performing
the Prayer
before Allah,
you should
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fitting and
decent manner

CHAPTER TWO

Ablution or WUDŪ'

Preparing for Prayer requires making ready your body as well as your heart and mind, since all of these will participate in the Prayer. To prepare your body, you are required to wash certain parts like the face, hands and feet. This is called *Wudu'*. Its purpose is for you to acquire a sense of purity as you get ready to stand in the presence of your Creator Who is Absolutely Pure. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) pointed out that this ablution also washes away sins committed by these organs of the body. With a sincere intention to perform the Prayer, the basic essentials of *Wudu'* are to wash your face and arms, wipe over your head, and wash your feet. However, a more perfect form of *Wudu'* which was communicated to the Prophet (PBUH) by the Angel Gabriel is outlined here. Start by saying:



Bismillah

In the name of Allah

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) pointed out that this ablution also washes away sins committed by these organs of the body



1. Wash your hands.



3. Clean out your nose with water.



5. Wash your right and then left arm up to elbow.



7. Wash your right and then left foot as far as the ankle.



2. Rinse your mouth out with water.



4. Wash your face.



6. Pass your wet hands over your hair and wipe in and outside your ear with thumbs and index fingers.

The principle is that the washing covers the whole of these areas and that no dry patches are left. They should be washed once, twice or a recommended three times with the exception of 6 which is required just once.

Occasions Which Require *Wudu'* to be Repeated

It is not necessary to perform *Wudu'* for every Prayer if the last ablution performed is still valid. It is highly unlikely, however, that you will be able to go without renewing your *Wudu'* for an entire day. Things that require you to renew your ablution are:

- defecating, urinating or passing wind
- falling into a deep sleep thereby losing consciousness
- temporary loss of consciousness due to fainting spells or hysteria

Wiping Over the Socks

If you have performed *Wudu'*, and then put on your socks, it is not necessary to remove them every time you repeat your ablution for one day (or for three days if you are on a journey). You may wipe your wet hands over the socks to complete your *Wudu'* instead of washing your feet.

Occasions When a Full Shower – *Ghusl* is Required Before Prayer

You should bathe regularly so that, as an ambassador of Islam, you may present yourself and your beliefs to others in a pleasant manner. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recommended bathing at least once weekly even then, when facilities were not as they are today.

There are certain occasions, however, when you are required to perform *Ghusl* – take a full shower to wash your entire body, and during which the parts of your body specified in the making of *Wudū*^{*} should also be washed, before you can perform the Prayer. These occasions are:

- on entering Islam (after reciting *Shahāda*)
- after intimate relations, i.e. sexual intercourse between husband and wife whether semen has been ejected or not
- any discharge of semen, i.e. having experienced a wet dream
- when a woman has completed her monthly period^{*}
- after childbirth when post-natal bleeding has stopped^{*}

How to Do *Ghusl*

The aim is to wash your entire body. Begin with washing the genitals followed by the procedure for *Wudū*, excluding the feet. Then wash the head and the entire body starting with the right side followed by the left and concluding with the feet. If a woman has long hair which is plaited it is not necessary for her to untie it. To throw water over it three times using her hands is sufficient, as long as water reaches the scalp.

^{*} When a woman's monthly period commences she must not perform Prayer from that moment until its complete cessation. The same applies in the case of post-natal bleeding. She may only resume Prayer after performing *Ghusl* and does not have to make up for any Prayers missed during that time

When and How to Perform Dry Ablution or *Tayammum*

There are a number of occasions when you are allowed to perform dry ablution instead of ablution with water before you perform Prayer. These are:

- Enough water to make *Wudū*^{*} may not be available, e.g. while travelling or in the event of a drought and the time for Prayers is running out.
- You may be ill and cannot get to water or the exertion may be harmful for you.
- The use of water may be harmful, e.g. a skin condition or wounds may be aggravated by it.

If you experience any of the above or a relatively similar problematic situation you should perform dry ablution as follows:

- Strike both hands lightly on any dry, clean surface of earth.
- Wipe the face once followed by both hands to the wrists.

More About Personal Hygiene or *Tahārah*

Cleanliness or purity, referred to as *Tahārah* in the Qur'ān, indicates both spiritual and physical cleanliness, because Allah is concerned with man's moral, spiritual and material well-being. Therefore, showering and performing ablution are not the only requirements; for personal hygiene the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) made several recommendations. These were to pay particular attention to the teeth through use of the *Miswak*, a naturally-grown stick with dental hygiene properties, or regular brushing with tooth-

Cleanliness or purity indicates both spiritual and physical cleanliness, because Allah is concerned with man's moral, spiritual and material well-being

brush and paste. It is also recommended that the nails should be trimmed and the pubic and underarm hair be removed or at least trimmed regularly. Washing hands before and after meals, eating properly and only from what is allowed, as well as being concerned about one's physical fitness are also duties for every Muslim.

Particular attention is drawn to maintaining cleanliness after having relieved yourself in the toilet. Toilet tissue can be used in the normal manner but you should also cultivate the preferred habit of cleaning yourself by carefully and thoroughly washing your private parts with water. The right hand is used for pouring while using your left hand for the washing process. This is called *Istinjā'* and can be done using a water container, a bidet or a spray hose, all of which are familiar objects in Muslim homes and Mosques throughout the UK. If water is not available, extra care should be taken to ensure cleanliness through the use of toilet tissue alone. The use of urinals for men will not allow for this procedure to work effectively, and therefore it is best to avoid them if possible.

Muslims are forbidden to relieve themselves in waterways or in shady areas, which should be respected for public use, and should always relieve themselves in privacy.

Muslims are forbidden to relieve themselves in waterways or in shady areas, which should be respected for public use

The Call to Prayer

ADHĀN AND IQĀMA

These terms refer to the words called out prior to communal or *Jamā'a* Prayer at the Mosque or indeed in any place where a group of Muslims are gathered together and will therefore Pray together. For those who have only just begun to learn how to Pray there is, at this stage, no necessity to learn all the words. It is, however, of value to look at and understand their meaning as they contain much of the essence and importance of the five daily Prayers.

The *Adhān* is the call to Prayer. It has been called from the minarets or courtyards of Mosques for more than 1400 years, and always by means of the human voice. This unique method of announcing the time for a Prayer has started, reminds everyone of the basic teachings of Islam as well as inviting him/her to the Prayer. It also serves as a reminder for those living in the immediate area that they should prepare for the Prayer by making *Wudū'* and, for those who are able, to make their way to the Mosque, so

The Adhan – a unique method of announcing the time for a Prayer has started, reminds everyone of the basic teachings of Islam as well as inviting him/ her to the Prayer

they can Pray in congregation as desired. It is called by one of those who will take part in the Prayer or by the Mu'adh-dhin, one who is appointed to call the Adhān.

The words for the Adhān, and the number of times they are repeated, are as follows:

الله أكبر
Allāhu Akbar (4)

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illallāh (2)

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
Ashhadu anna Muḥammadan
Rasūlullāh (2)

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ
Hayya alās-Salāh (2)

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ
Hayya 'alāl-Falāh (2)

الله أكبر
Allāhu Akbar (2)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
lā ilāha illallāh (1)

The Adhān for the dawn, Fajr Prayer, differs slightly in that the following is added after Hayya 'alāl-Falāh:

الصَّلَاةُ خَيْرٌ مِنَ النَّوْمِ
Assalātu khayrun minan-
nawm (2)

Just before starting the Prayer in congregation the Iqāma is said. The Iqāma serves to let those who have assembled at the place of Prayer know that an obligatory or Fard Prayer is about to begin. As it is being called those present form into neat, straight rows behind the Imām as he stands and prepares to lead them in Prayer.

The words of the Iqāma differ from those of the Adhān in one sentence only. The words Qad Qāmatīs-Salāh are added and repeated twice to announce that the Prayer is about to commence.

The words for the Iqāma, and the number of times they are repeated, are as follows:

الله أكبر
Allāhu Akbar (2)

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illallāh (1)

أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ
Ashhadu anna Muḥammadan
Rasūlullāh (1)

حَيَّ عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ
Hayya alās-Salāh (1)

حَيَّ عَلَى الْفَلَاحِ
Hayya 'alāl-Falāh (1)

قَدْ قَامَتِ الصَّلَاةُ
Qad Qāmatīs-Salāh (2)

Prayer has begun

الله أكبر Allah is Greatest
 Allāhu Akbar (2)

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللهُ There is no god but Allah
 lā ilāha illallāh (1)

What is an Obligatory or *Fard* Prayer?

Each Prayer is composed of a number of units, each unit being called a *Rak'a*. Some of these *Rak'as* are performed silently or whispered to oneself. Others are audible, meaning that the verses from Qur'an and the words proceeding each movement are said aloud, while the rest of the Prayer is silent.

- The dawn or *Fajr* Prayer has 2 *Rak'as* and is performed audibly.
- The noon or *Zuhr* Prayer has 4 *Rak'as* and is performed silently.
- The afternoon or *Asr* Prayer has 4 *Rak'as* and is performed silently.
- The evening or *Maghrib* Prayer has 3 *Rak'as*, the first two of which are performed audibly, the third silently.
- The night or *Isha'* Prayer has 4 *Rak'as*, the first two of which are performed audibly followed by two performed silently.

After every two *Rak'as* one must either finish the Prayer, as in the case of the *Fajr* Prayer which is composed only of two *Rak'as*, or continue by resuming the standing position and repeating one or two more *Rak'as* in order to complete one of the other four daily Prayers.

How the Prayer – *Salah*, is Performed

Prayer provides a regular opportunity to remind yourself of the Ultimate Truth: that you are here on earth only in order to live as Allah, your Creator, desires. It is a time, therefore, of contemplation and deep spiritual awakening. During it, you should not allow yourself to be distracted by disturbances which often occur around you. You should not talk, laugh, eat or drink anything or make any unnecessary or excessive motions, but concentrate, remembering that your Prayer is to and for the sake of Allah alone. Every part of you should be involved in the Prayer.

Before commencing you must be clear in your intention, *Niyya*, to perform this particular obligatory Prayer for the sake of Allah.

Standing facing the *Qibla* on clean ground, a mat or clean cover you begin by raising your hands to your ears with palms facing front, and saying:

الله أكبر Allah is Greatest
 Allāhu Akbar

Then lower your arms to the centre of your body, the right hand resting on the left hand.

In this standing position the first thing you must recite is the first chapter (*Sūrah*) of the Qur'an: *Sūrat al-Fatiḥa* or 'The Opening', the meaning of which is very beautiful:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāh-rahmānir-
Rahim

In the name of Allah the
Most Gracious the Most
Merciful

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
Al-Hamdu lillāhi Rabbil- Alamin

All praise is due to Allah,
the Lord of the worlds

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Ar-Rahmānir-Rahim

The Most Gracious the
Most Merciful

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
Māliki yawmid-din

Master of the Day of
Judgement

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ
Iyyaka na budu wa iyyaka
nasta in

You alone we worship
and you alone we ask
for help

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ
Ihdinaṣ-ṣirāṭal-mustaqim

Show us the Straight way

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ
ṣirāṭal-ladhina an amta
alayhim

The way of those whom
You have blessed

غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ
ghayri-l-maghḍūbi alayhim
wa lād-dāllin

not those who have
earned your anger or
gone astray.

This is followed by the word

آمين
Amin

Amen

(As soon as you are able, you should recite here one other
short *Sūrah* from the Qur'ān. Try to learn from the
selection provided on the enclosed tape. This applies only
in the first two *Rak* as of every Prayer.)

Having recited this *Sūrah*, you repeat the words:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ Allah is Greatest
Allāhu Akbar

and bow, with your hands gripping your knees, your back
and head level. You rest in this position, called *Rukū'*, and
repeat three times:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ Glory be to my Lord,
Subhāna Rabbī al- Azīm the Almighty

While returning to the upright position, you say:

سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ Allah hears the one who
Samī a Allāhu liman praises Him
ḥamidah

followed (in the upright position) by

رَبَّنَا وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ Our Lord, Praise be to you
Rabāna walakal-ḥamd

You then repeat the words:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ Allah is Greatest
Allāhu Akbar

and prostrate yourself before Allah.

Prostration, *Sajda*, is a sign of your complete submission in all humility to Allah. From the standing position, lower yourself to a kneeling position, your forehead and nose touching the ground, the palms of your hands flat on the ground each side of your head. With your arms and elbows slightly off the floor you are now in the prostration position. While in this position you repeat three times:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى
Subhana Rabbi al-A la

Glory be to my Lord, the
Most High

Then say:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ
Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greatest

and sit back on your feet for a few moments, resting your hands on your thighs near to your knees. In this position it is highly recommended to supplicate and ask Allah for Forgiveness and Mercy.

After a moment or two say:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ
Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greatest

and return to the prostration position, using the same words as before. This brings to an end one *Rak a* of the Prayer

To complete the second *Rak a* you repeat the words:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ
Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greatest

and resume the original standing position, repeating the entire procedure up to this point.

To finish the Prayer you repeat the words:

اللهُ أَكْبَرُ
Allahu Akbar

Allah is Greatest

and resume the sitting position similar to that assumed between the two prostrations. Resting comfortably in that position you raise your right index finger and recite the following Prayer known as the *Tashahhud*.

التَّحِيَّاتُ لِلَّهِ
At-Tahiyātu Lillahi

All greetings are for Allah

وَالصَّلَوَاتُ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ
Was-Salawatu Wal-Tayyibatu

and Prayers and
goodness

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ
As-salamu Alayka Ayyuhan-Nabiyyu

Peace be on you,
O Prophet

وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
Wa Rahmatullāhi Wa Barakātuhu

and the Mercy and
Blessings of Allah

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَى عِبَادِ اللَّهِ
الصَّالِحِينَ
Assalamu Alayna wa Ala
Ibadillahis-Salihin

Peace be on us and on
the righteous servants of
Allah

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illallāh

I bear witness that there
is no god but Allah

وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا
Wa ashhadu anna
Muhammadan

and I bear witness that
Muhammad

عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
Abduhu wa Rasūluh

is His servant and His
messenger

This is followed by the Prayer known as *Ṣalat 'alā al-Nabī*, 'Prayer on the Prophet (PBUH)'. (This supplication is recommended although the obligatory Prayer would not be defective without it. It is advisable therefore, to learn it as soon as you can.)

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā
Muhammad

O Allah, send Prayers on
Muhammad,

وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
wa 'alā āli Muḥammad

and on the family of
Muhammad

كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
kamā ṣallayta 'alā Ibrāhīm

as You sent Prayers on
Ibrahim

وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
wa 'alā āli Ibrāhīm

and his family,

إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ
innaka ḥamidūn majīd

You are indeed worthy of
Praise, full of Glory.

اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
Allāhumma Barik 'alā
Muḥammad

O Allah, send Blessings on
Muhammad

وَعَلَى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ
wa 'alā āli Muḥammad

and on the family of
Muhammad

كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ
kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīm

as You blessed Ibrahim

وَعَلَى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
wa 'alā āli Ibrāhīm

and the family of Ibrahim,

إِنَّكَ حَمِيدٌ مَجِيدٌ
innaka ḥamidūn majīd

You indeed are worthy of
Praise full of Glory.

Finally, turning your head to the right and looking towards your shoulder, say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
As-Salāmu 'alaykum wa
Raḥmatullāh

The peace and Mercy of
Allah be with you

and turning your head to the left and looking towards your shoulder, say:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ
As-Salāmu 'alaykum wa
Raḥmatullāh

The peace and Mercy of
Allah be with you

This *Salām* completes the actions for the dawn or *Fajr* Prayer.

If you are performing one of the other four daily Prayers which necessitates one or two more *Rak'as*, you simply recite the *Tashahhud* after the first two *Rak'as*, then resume the standing position repeating:

الله أكبر Allah is Greatest
Allahu Akbar

and complete one or two more *Rak'as* (according to the Prayer in question) ending with the *Tashahhud* (and *Salat ala al-Nabi* when you are able) and make the final *Salam*.

To understand this procedure more fully, see 'The Performance of Prayer with Illustrations', Chapter 7, page 59 of this manual, together with the accompanying Audio cassette.

Varying Schools of Thought

Please note that there are slight variations relating to both the actions and the words used in the Prayer depending on the school of law being followed. There is no need to concern yourself should you notice some of these differences when you are Praying in congregation or if they are pointed out to you by a well-meaning person in the Mosque. As your Islam grows and develops you will come to appreciate those slight differences more and understand that they are all acceptable in that they do not affect the validity of your Prayer.

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER AND WHEN IT MUST BE PERFORMED

Every obligatory Prayer should be performed in *Jamā'a* – congregation – if possible. According to the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Prayer in congregation brings 27 times the reward of Prayer performed individually and this recommendation applies to all Muslims.

There are a number of Prayers, however, which are Prayed only in congregation. They are:

- Friday or *Jumu'a* Prayer.
- Prayer performed on the occasion of the two major festivals *'Id al-Fitr* and *'Id al-Adha*.
- Funeral or *Janāza* Prayer for the deceased.

The format of the Prayer performed in congregation is the same as that performed by the individual. If you are a man attending congregational Prayer you should stand next to the other men present in straight, complete rows behind the Imam. You should not make a movement

**... Prayer
in congregation
brings 27 times
the reward
of Prayer
performed
individually
and this
recommen-
dation applies
to all Muslims**

ahead of the *Imam* nor should you anticipate his movements but, together with the entire congregation, follow his movements which are signalled by the words *Allahu Akbar*, 'Allah is Greatest'. He brings the Prayer to a conclusion by making the *Salām* towards his right and then left shoulder.

Women also Pray in congregation, either by joining together with the family, neighbourhood or at community level by attending congregational Prayers at the Mosque, where they may Pray in rows behind the men or in a separate area provided for them elsewhere in the Mosque.

When a group of women Pray in congregation where one of them acts as the leader, she takes her place in the middle of the first row of women and follows the same procedure for the congregational Prayer. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said that the female servants of Allah should not be prevented from going to the Mosque to Pray. All Mosques should therefore make proper and adequate provisions for women to exercise this right. Women are not obliged to Pray in the Mosque as men are, however, and because of their occupation with children may prefer to Pray at home.

Arriving Late for Congregational Prayer

If you arrive to find that the obligatory Prayer has already begun, you should join the row of worshippers and, having made your intention raise your hands to the level of your ears, palms facing the front, say:

الله أكبر Allah is Greatest
Allahu Akbar

Women also
Pray in
congregation,
either by
joining
together with
the family,
neighbourhood
or at
community
level by
attending
congregational
Prayers at the
Mosque

Then immediately join the worshippers at whatever stage they are at in the Prayer. If it is at the prostration, then go immediately into the prostration position with the rest of the lines. Even if you arrive immediately before the *Imām* is about to conclude the Prayer with the final *Salām*, join the worshippers in their position at that point so that you may get the blessings of Praying in congregation. After the *Imām* has made the final *Salām*, you (without making the *Salām* yourself) should resume your standing position to complete the number of *Rak'as* you have missed.

If you have joined the Prayer any time up to and including the time of *Rukū'*, bowing down (during which the words *Subhāna Rabbi al-'Azīm* – 'Glory to Allah the Great' are repeated 3 times), that whole *Rak'a* is counted.

If you have joined after that time, that is when the *Imām* has resumed the standing position having said *Sami'a Allahu liman hamidah* – 'Allah hears the one who praises Him', the whole *Rak'a* and any preceding *Rak'as* you have missed must be made up.

Attending the Friday or Jumu'a Prayer

Friday Prayer, as it has come to be referred to, or *Jumu'a* Prayer, takes the place of the noon or *Zuhr* Prayer which is normally performed at this time every other day of the week. It consists of two, instead of the normal four *Rak'as* and is preceded by a sermon or *Khutba* which is delivered by the *Imām*.

The length of the *Khutba* will depend on the need and situation. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) recommended that it should be short. It begins after the *Adhān* is called and takes about 20 to 30 minutes. Its purpose is to remind

Friday Prayer, as it has come to be referred to, or Jumu'a Prayer, takes the place of the noon Prayer which is normally performed at this time every other day of the week

Muslims of the important aspects of Islam in all areas of life and as such can address contemporary social and political issues. It regularly draws the congregation's attention to their relationship with Allah, life after death or the virtues and characteristics of a good Muslim. This is supported by recitation from the Qur'an and relevant *Hadith*, sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). The *Imām* delivers the *Khutba* from the *Minbar*, a pulpit-like structure at the front of the Mosque, during which the worshippers remain in a sitting position neither Praying nor talking but listening attentively.

The *Khutba* is in two parts: the *Imām*, after delivering the first part in a standing position, sits for a moment before resuming the standing position and commencing with the second part. The second part consists of Praise for Allah, invoking Blessings on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and the Believers and making supplication for the whole of mankind to establish truth, love, justice, and peace on earth. When the *Imām* has finished the *Khutba*, the *Iqāma*, which is the final indication that the Prayer is about to commence, is called. The congregation responds by standing and forming neat and complete rows behind the *Imām* who leads them in the Prayer.

Muslim men are obliged to attend the *Jumu'a* Prayer in the Mosque or any other venue where it is Prayed in congregation. If it is missed, for example, due to:

- severe weather conditions
- being ill yourself or having to look after someone who is ill
- living or working in a remote area
- if you are travelling
- if you have unsuccessfully tried to negotiate time off work

Muslim men are obliged to attend the *Jumu'a* Prayer in the Mosque or any other venue where it is Prayed in congregation

Jumu'a Prayer cannot be made up but should be replaced by the noon, *Zuhr* Prayer.

Attendance at *Jumu'a* Prayer is optional for women who, if not attending should also replace it with the usual noon, *Zuhr* Prayer.

The Festival or *Id* Prayers

There are two major festivals in Islam. Both commence with a congregational Prayer. One is *Id al-Fitr*, the festival of the breaking of the fast. The other is *Id al-Adha*, the festival of sacrifice.

Id al-Fitr falls on the first day of the month of *Shawwal* following the blessed month of *Ramadan* during which the Qur'an began to be revealed and which is, of course, the month of fasting for every able-bodied Muslim. This festival brings the fasting month to a joyous conclusion.

Id al-Adha falls on the tenth day of *Dhu'l-Hijja*, the last month of the Muslim calendar, and concludes the *Hajj*, the prescribed pilgrimage to Makka. Those who have participated in the *Hajj* repent and make the sincere intention to renounce all temptations, renewing their covenant with their Creator to pursue the path of righteousness.

Both of these occasions are celebrated together with the rest of the community. Preparations include cooking special sweetmeats and buying new clothes and gifts for family and friends.

Attending in congregation for the *Id* Prayer is highly recommended for the whole family. Even women who are having their monthly period, though they are not Praying, are strongly recommended to attend with the rest of the family. After the congregational Prayer and in the spirit of

Attending in congregation for the *Id* Prayer is highly recommended for the whole family. Even women who are having their monthly period, though they are not Praying, are strongly recommended to attend with the rest of the family

love and brotherhood, you invite friends and neighbours to celebrate with you in your home.

No *Adhān* or *Iqāma* is required for the 'Id Prayer and it is read out aloud. It consists of 2 *Rak'as* which commence with the words *Allāhu Akbar* pronounced 7 times at the beginning of the first *Rak'a* and 5 times preceeding the second *Rak'a*. After the Prayer is completed the *Imām* delivers a *Khutba* to the congregation. On its conclusion the congregation intermingles, wishing each other peace, *Salām* and blessings for the festival of 'Id.

The Funeral or *Janāza* Prayer

Prayers for the deceased Muslim is a common collective duty on the community. However, if a number of Muslims are present at this time and have attended to this requirement they are representative of the entire community, the rest of whom, though they could not attend, are exempted from the responsibility.

The *Janāza* – funeral Prayer is offered in the standing position. The *Imām* stands beside the body and in front of the congregation, all facing in the direction of the *Qibla* and calls *Allāhu Akbar* four times with short intervals between. During these intervals the *Imām* and the congregation read recommended Prayers and supplications silently:

- After the first mention of *Allāhu Akbar* (God is Greatest), *Sūrat al-Fātiha* is read.
- After the second, Blessings are invoked on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
- After the third, a Prayer is offered for mercy and forgiveness for the deceased.
- After the fourth and final mention of *Allāhu Akbar*, a Prayer is offered for all Muslim men and women, dead and alive.

The Prayer is concluded as the *Imām*, followed by the congregation, turns his face slightly towards his right shoulder saying *As-Salāmu Alaykum wa Rahmatullāh*. The body is then taken to be buried.

Tarāwih – Night Prayer During the Month of *Ramādān*

A special characteristic of *Ramādān*, is the *Tarāwih* Prayer. This Prayer may be Prayed individually or collectively. It consists of units of 2 *Rak'as* Prayed in pairs similar to the *Fajr* Prayer. It is performed after *Isha* Prayer and is usually followed by *Shaf* and *Witr* Prayers. It is commendable, though not essential, that a reading of the entire *Qur'an* is completed during *Ramādān* in the *Tarāwih* Prayer.

Shortening the Prayer

The traveller is given some relief from offering some of the Prayers in their complete form. If one is on a journey, the *Zuhr* and afternoon, *Asr* Prayers are shortened to two *Rak'as* each. Moreover, permission is also granted for both these shortened Prayers to be Prayed together some time within their given period. To 'Pray them together' means first to Pray the shortened form of one, close with *Salām* as usual and then immediately begin the shortened form of the next Prayer. The evening, *Maghrib* Prayer remains its usual 3 *Rak'as* but the night, *Isha* Prayer is reduced to 2 *Rak'as* with permission also granted to Pray both these Prayers together within their given period. The dawn, *Fajr* Prayer remains the same and is Prayed at its normal time.

A Loss for Words

At any time during your Prayer you cannot recall the words, do not lose heart. Simply praise Allah using the

If at any time during your Prayer you cannot recall the words, do not lose heart. Simply praise Allah using the simple phrases you may remember

Prayers for the deceased Muslim is a common collective duty on the community. However, if a number of Muslims are present at this time and have attended to this requirement they are representative of the entire community

simple phrases you may remember, such as *Allāhu Akbar* – 'Allah Is Greatest', or *Subhān Allah* – 'Glory to Allah', *al-Hamdulillah* – 'All Praise is due to Allah' and complete the sequence to the end. Time, practice, patience and seeking help from Allah will eventually make you word perfect.

MAKING PETITION OR SUPPLICATION – DU‘Ā’

Muslims are encouraged to give thanks to Allah for the favours He has provided and the Blessings He showers on His servants every day. You are also encouraged to humbly request His help and guidance relating to your everyday problems and concerns. The Prophet (PBUH) encouraged supplication and regarded it as the essence of worship. This can be done in your own words using your mother tongue or in Arabic if you have learned some *Du‘ā’*.

When the Prayer is completed, raise your hands and make your petition.



Arabic *du'ā's**Du'ā' 1*

رَبَّنَا
Rabbana,

Our Lord,

آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً
atinā fid-dunyā Ḥasanatan

give us Good in this world

وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً
wa fil-ākhirati Ḥasanatan

and Good in the Hereafter,

وَقْنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ
wa qinā 'adhab an-nār

and save us from the
torments of the fire.

Du'ā' 2

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي
Rabbi ishrah li ṣadri,

O my Lord, expand my
breast [for understanding/
iman]

وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي
wa yassir li amri

and ease my task for me.

Du'ā' 3

رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا
Rabbi Zidnī 'ilmā

O my Lord, advance me
in knowledge

Du'ā' 4

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ
Rabbighfir warḥam

O my Lord, grant
forgiveness and mercy

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ
wa Anta khayrur-rahimin

for You are the best of
those who show mercy.

Sunna or Optional Prayers

Up to now we have dealt only with the compulsory Prayers because they are an obligation on every Muslim, male and female. As you become more confident in both the learning and performance of the Prayer your desire to do more will increase and you will feel compelled to incorporate more of the recommended Prayers, which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was in the habit of performing and optional Prayers, which you may personally wish to include in your daily routine. They are as follows:

- Fajr, Dawn Prayer, 2 highly recommended *Rak'as* before the compulsory Prayer.
- Zuhr, Noon Prayer, 4 highly recommended *Rak'as* before the compulsory Prayer and 2 highly recommended *Rak'as* after the compulsory Prayer.
- Asr, Afternoon Prayer, 4 optional *Rak'as* before the compulsory Prayer.
- Maghrib, Sunset Prayer, 2 highly recommended *Rak'as* after the compulsory Prayer.
- 'Ishā, Night Prayer, 2 optional *Rak'as* before the compulsory Prayer and 2 after, followed by 1 highly recommended *Rak'a* known as *Witr* or 'odd number'.

These highly recommended and optional Prayers are Prayed in addition to the compulsory Prayer and at the same time. In some instances they are Prayed prior to, while in others, following the compulsory Prayer.

The *Witr* Prayer is so highly recommended as to be regarded as almost compulsory. It is generally preceded by two *Rak'as* referred to as *Shaf'* which literally means 'even number'. These are then followed by one *Rak'a* of *Witr* which literally means 'odd number'. It is regarded as the final night Prayer and can be Prayed anytime during the night after the compulsory '*Isha'* Prayer (and *Tarāwih* Prayer in *Ramādān*) and before *Fajr* Prayer.

GREETINGS AND OTHER RECOMMENDED EXPRESSIONS

Prayer withdraws you from your routine worldly life for short periods of time and provides an opportunity to remember Allah intensely, with your heart and mind, tongue and limbs. Then, as a Muslim, you must carry out your worldly duties as best you can. The lessons that Prayer imparts, and which should remain with you, are:

- (i) Be mindful of Allah; remember that you are always in His Presence and that everything you receive is from Him.
- (ii) Remember that everything that happens, happens because He wills it to happen and that nothing you do should violate His teachings.
- (iii) Remember Allah as much and as often as you can without giving up or interrupting your normal life.

Thus remembrance is basically an act of the heart, and although Prayer time allows for this specifically, you are

highly encouraged to respond to everything in the form of a Prayer, thus being mindful of Allah at all times. The following are occasions when such responses are recommended:

Think Before You Act

You should commence every action in the name of Allah – eating, drinking, travelling, writing, speaking, etc. Invoking Allah's name makes you more aware that the action you are undertaking is in compliance with His Commands and does not involve something that is wrong or unjust. You should familiarise yourself with this highly recommended habit as you will hear Muslims frequently utter the words:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ In the name of Allah
Bismillah

or a longer version

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ In the name of Allah the
Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim Most Gracious, the Most
Merciful

Give Praise for Everything

You should be fully conscious of the bounties Allah has set out for all His creation. The belief that He continues to shower His Mercy, Compassion and Blessings on His humble servants expresses itself in words of Praise, whatever the circumstances.

If someone inquires about your health or the well-being of your family, your reply should commence with:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ All Praise is for Allah
Al-Hamdulillah

Greet Each Other Warmly

When Muslims meet they are encouraged to greet each other with Prayers invoking peace, and extend hospitality and good-will at home and in the community at large. The Qur'an reminds us of the following etiquette when greeted:

If you enter houses, salute each other – a greeting of blessing and purity as from Allah. (Sûrah 24: 61)

To all those who are God-fearing and believe in the Signs of Creation, the Qur'an reminds us:

When those come to you who believe in Our Signs say: Peace be on you. (Sûrah 6: 54)

You greet another Muslim, therefore, by saying:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ Peace be upon you
as-Salamu alaykum

You respond to this greeting with the words:

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ And Peace also with you
wa-alaykum as-salam

According to the Qur'anic verse:

When a courteous greeting is offered to you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or at least of equal courtesy. Allah takes full account of all things.

(Sûrah 4: 86)

Hence you will hear an even longer greeting:

السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ
as-Salāmu 'alaykum

May the Peace,

وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
wa-Rahmatullāh wa-Barakātuh

Mercy and Blessings of
Allah be with you

You respond with the words:

وَعَلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامُ
wa 'alaykum as-salām

And may the Peace,

وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ
wa-Rahmatullāh wa-Barakātuh

Mercy and Blessings of
Allah be with you

Give Thanks for Creation

When you experience pleasure, for example, in seeing a new-born baby or feeling awe at the wonders of nature, you are not only moved by the Perfection of Allah's Creation but you should also invoke His Blessings on it by saying:

مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ
Mashā' Allah

Allah has willed it to be so

Purify Your Intention

If you intend to carry out some task in the future or attend to an appointment, be it five minutes, days or years ahead, the expression you use is:

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
Inshā' Allah

If Allah wills

Remember Allah's Favours

When you encounter an event, a phenomena which is out of the ordinary or you see those less fortunate than yourself and you are reminded of the favours which Allah has bestowed upon you, you express thanks with the words:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
Subhān Allāh

Glory be to Allah

Pray for the Generous

Receiving and giving gifts is encouraged among Muslims, especially at times of celebration and particularly the two major festivals of Id. When you receive a gift it is preferable, as an expression of thanks, to use a phrase that is a Prayer for the giver, such as:

بَارَكَ اللَّهُ فِيكَ
Barak Allāhu fīkum

May Allah Bless you

or you may say:

جَزَاكَ اللَّهُ خَيْرًا
Jazzākum Allāhu khayran

May Allah Reward you with
good

A Sneeze and a Prayer

Muslims are obliged according to the *Sunnah* or saying of the Prophet (PBUH) to return a blessing on one who sneezes. The one sneezing, should say:

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
Al-Hamdulillah

All Praise is for Allah

You, and anyone who is within earshot, should return the blessing, by saying:

يَرْحَمُكَ اللَّهُ May Allah give you Mercy
Yarhamuk-Allah

Remembering Allah in Times of Grief

When you hear of the death of someone or you are suffering some hardship or difficulty, you should say:

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ From Allah we come and
Inna li-Llāhi wa-innā to Him is our return
ilayhi rāji' ūn

Travel Safely

When you are parting company or going on a journey you may greet others as you would when you meet, using the familiar *as Salām* 'alaykum etc. However there is another very deep and meaningful supplication which you are recommended to extend to the traveller, which is:

فِي أَمَانِ اللَّهِ May you go with the
fi amānillah safety of Allah

Respecting Allah, His Prophets and his Companions

Special attention should be paid when mentioning Allah and His Prophets, particularly the Prophet Muḥammad and his pious Companions both male and female.

When you mention Allah's name it should be followed by the words:

اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى Allah, Glory be to Him
Allah, Subḥānahu wa-Ta'ālā the most High

اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ Allah, the Mighty,
Allāh, 'Azza wa-Jalla the Majestic

When you mention the Prophet Muḥammad's name it should be followed by the words:

مُحَمَّدٌ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ Muḥammad, May the
Muḥammad, Ṣallallāhu Peace and Blessings of
alayhi wa Ṣallam Allah be upon him

If you mention any of the Prophets other than Muḥammad (PBUH), this is followed by the words:

مُوسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام Moses, Peace be upon
Mūsā, 'Alayhis-Salām him

عِيسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام Jesus, Peace be upon him
'Isa, 'Alayhis-Salām

Male Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) are mentioned thus:

أَبُو بَكْرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ Abu Bakr, may Allah be
Abu Bakr, Radiyallāhu 'anhu pleased with him

Female Companions of the Prophet (PBUH) are mentioned thus:

خَدِيجَةُ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا Khadija, may Allah be
Khadija, Radiya-Allāhu 'anha pleased with her

Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness are endless

When you hear or see anything bad or immoral or fear you have done something incorrect you should immediately turn to Allah for forgiveness. In this event you should say:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ I seek forgiveness from
Astaghfirullah Allah

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PERFORMANCE OF
THE DAWN OR FAJR
PRAYER IN ARABIC

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS)

Step 1. Standing on clean ground, mat or clean cover you begin by making the intention, *Niyya*, to Pray this *Fajr* Prayer for the sake of Allah.

Then raising your hands to the level of your ears, with palms facing the front, say:

Allahu Akbar



Step 2.

Lower your arms to the centre of your body, the right hand resting on the left hand, and recite the opening *Sūrah* of the Qur'an, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa*:

Bismillāhir-Raḥmānir-Raḥim
Al-Ḥamdu lillāhi Rabbil-Ālamīn
Ar-Raḥmānir-Raḥim
Maliki yawmid-dīn
Iyyāka na'budu wa-iyyāka nasta'in
Ihdi-nāṣ-ṣirāṭal-mustaqīm
ṣirāṭal-ladhīna an'amta 'alayhim
ghayri'l-maghḍūbi 'alayhim wa lad-dalīn
Amin

(This is followed on the tape by another short *Surah* from the Qur'an which you are recommended to learn and recite when you can. This applies to the first two *Rak* as of the Prayer only.)



Step 3.

After this you say: *Allāhu Akbar*

bow, with your hands gripping your knees and your head level, and repeat three times:



Subḥāna Rabbi al-'Azīm

Step 4.

assuming the upright position with your hands by your sides say:



Sami'a Allāhu liman ḥamidah
Rabbanā walakal-ḥamd

Step 5.

Repeat the words:
Allāhu Akbar

From the standing position lower yourself to a kneeling position, your forehead and nose touching the ground, the palms of your hands flat on the ground each side of your head. Your arms and elbows should not touch the floor. You are now in the prostration position. In this position say, 3 times:



Subhāna Rabbi al-'Alā

Step 6.

Repeat the words: *Allāhu Akbar*

Then sit back on your feet with your hands resting on your thighs near to your knees. In this position it is highly recommended to supplicate and ask Allah for forgiveness and Mercy.



Step 7.

After a moment or two, repeat:
Allāhu Akbar

return to the prostration position, repeating as before 3 times.



Subhāna Rabbi al-'Alā

This completes one *Rak'a* of the Prayer.

To carry on with the second *Rak'a*, stand and repeat the words *Allāhu Akbar* followed by Steps 2-7.

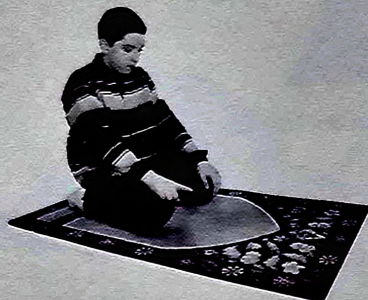
Step 8.

To conclude the prescribed two *Rak'as* of the Dawn or *Fajr* Prayer repeat: *Allāhu Akbar*



Sitting back on your feet and resting your hands on your thighs near to your knees, similar to the position you assumed between the two prostrations, you raise your right index finger and recite the following Prayer known as the Tashahhud:

*At-Taḥiyyātu Lillāhi
waṣ-Ṣalawātu waṭ-Tayyibātu
As-salāmu 'Alayka Ayyuhan-Nabiyyu
wa Raḥmatullāhi wa Barakātuḥu
Assalāmu 'Alaynā
wa 'Alā Ibadillāh-iṣ-ṣaliḥin*



*Ashhadu an lā ilāha illallāh
wa-ashhadu anna Muḥammadan
'abduḥu wa Rasūluḥ*

(This is followed by the Prayer known as *aṣ-Ṣalāt 'alan-Nabi* or Prayer on the Prophet (PBUH) which, though it is not required to complete your Prayer, you should learn and recite as soon as you can).

*Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad
wa 'alā āli Muḥammad
kamā ṣallayta 'alā Ibrāhīm
wa 'alā āli Ibrāhīm
innaka ḥamidun majīd
Allāhumma bārīk 'alā Muḥammad*

*wa 'alā āli Muḥammad
kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīm
wa 'alā āli Ibrāhīm
innaka ḥamidun majīd*

Step 9.

Finally, turn your head and looking towards your right shoulder, say: *As-Salāmu 'alaykum wa Raḥmatullāh* – and turning to your left and looking towards your left shoulder, say: *As-Salāmu 'alaykum wa Raḥmatullāh*.



This final *Salām* completes the requirements for the dawn or Fajr Prayer. The same instructions apply to the *Ẓuhr*, 'Aṣr or 'Isha' prayers when they are shortened (see p. 45).

If you are performing one of the other four daily Prayers which necessitate one or two more *Rak'as*, you simply recite the *Tashahhud* after the first two *Rak'as*, then resume the standing position repeating the words *Allāhu Akbar* and complete one or two more *Rak'as*, according to the Prayer in question and end with the *Tashahhud* (and *aṣ-Salāt 'alan-Nabi* when you are able) and make the final *Salām*. In the third and fourth *Raka's* of a Prayer, you should recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥa* only.

APPENDIX

Short Sūrahs from the Qur'ān

Chapter 106 The Tribe of Quraysh

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhīr-Rahmānir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

لِإِنْفَاقِ قُرَيْشٍ
Li-Infāqi Quraysh

For the benefit of the
Quraish.

لِيُخْرِجَهُمْ فِي شَهْرِ الْقِشَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ
Li-ikhrijihim fī shahri'l-shitā' wa'l-sayf
was-sayf

for their benefit the
caravans go out in the
winter and summer

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ
Falya budu Rabbu hadha
al-bayt

So they should worship
the Lord and Sustainer of
this House. (the Ka'bah)

الَّذِي أَطْمَنَّهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ
Al-ladhi aṭmanahum min
ju'in wa amanahum
min khawf

Who has fed them,
protected them from
hunger, and made them
safe from fear.

Chapter 107. Simple Acts of Kindness (Al-Ma'ûn)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ
Ara'ayta al-ladhī
yukadhhibu bid-dīn

Have you seen the one
who denies religion?

فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ
Fadhālika al-ladhī
yadu 'ul-yatīm

— the one who pushes the
orphan aside,

وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلٰى طَعَامِ الْيَتِيمِ
Wa-lā yaḥuddu
alā ta'āmil-miskīn

and does not encourage
feeding the poor people?

فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ
Fa-waylul lil-muṣallīn

Oh, wretched are the
worshippers

الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ
Al-ladhīna hum
an Ṣalatihim saḥūn

who are negligent in
their Prayers!

الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ
Al-ladhīna hum yura'ūn

The ones who show off
(in Prayer)

وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ
Wa-yamna' unal-ma'ūn

but refuse simple acts
of kindness!

Chapter 108. Abundance (of all that is good)
(Al-Kawthar)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

إِنَّا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكَوْثَرَ
Inna a'ṭaynāka al-Kawthar

Surely We have given you
the fountain of Abundance

فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَحْسِرْ
Fa-ṣalli li-Rabbika waḥṣir

so Pray to your Lord, and
make sacrifice.

إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ الْأَبْدَرُ
Inna shāni'aka huwal-ablar

Surely it is the one who
insults you (Muḥammad,
and not you) who will
leave no one behind to
remember him.

Chapter 109. The Unbelievers (Al-Kāfirūn)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

قُلْ يَا أَكْفِرُوا
Qul Yā ayyuhā-kāfirūn

Say: 'O, unbelievers!'

لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ
lā a'budu mā ta budūn

I do not worship what
you worship,

وَلَا أَتَشْعُرُ عَبْدُونَ مَا عِبُدُّ
wa-lá antum abiduna
má a bud

and you do not worship
what I worship.

وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَا عَبَدْتُمْ
Wa-la ana abidun
má abadtum

and I will not worship
what you worship.

وَلَا أَتَشْعُرُ عَبْدُونَ مَا عِبُدُّ
Wa-lá antum abiduna
má a bud

and you do not worship
what I worship.

لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَرَبِّي دِينِي
Lakum dinukum wa-tiya din

(So.) for you is your way.
and for me is mine.

Chapter 110 The Help (Al-Nasr)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhī-Rahmānir-Rahim

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ
Idha ja'a nasrullahi wal-fath

When Allah's help comes,
and a successful victory.

وَرَأَيْتُ الْآفَافَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا
wa ra aytā n-nāsa yadkhuluna
fi-dinillahi afwaja

and you see people
accepting Allah's religion
in masses.

فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَأَسْتَغْفِرْهُ
fasabbih bihamdi Rabbika
wastaghfirh

then remember to praise
your Lord and ask Him
for forgiveness.

إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا
innahu kana tawwābā

Surely He is always ready
to forgive.

Chapter 111. The Palm Leaf (Al-Lahab/Al-Masad)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhī-Rahmānir-Rahim

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ
Tabbat yada Abi Lahabin
wa-tabb

The power of Abu Lahab
will perish, and he will
perish

مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ
Ma aghna anhu maluhu
wa ma kasab

Neither his wealth nor
what he has gained will
help him

سَجَّ يَارَافَاتٍ لَّهَبٍ
sa-yaṣā naran dhata lahab

He will be pushed down
into the flaming Fire

وَأُزْلِجُهُ جَهَنَّمَ الْحَطَبِ
Wamraatuhu hamalat
al-halab

and his wife, the wood-
carrier

فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّنْ نَّسَمٍ
Fi jidiha hablum min masad

will have a rope of rough
palm leaves around her
neck

Chapter (112). **The Purity or Sincerity of Faith (al-Ikhlās)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhīr-Rahmanir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ
Qul Huwallāhu Aḥad

Say: 'He is Allah the
One and Only

اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ
Allāhus-Ṣamad

Allah the Eternal,
Absolute

لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ
Lam yalid wa-lam yūlad

He does not give birth
and He was not born

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ
wa-lam yakun lahu kufuwan Aḥad

and there is nothing (at
all) like Him.'

Chapter (113). **The Dawn (Al-Falaq)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhīr-Rahmanir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ
Qul A'ūdhu bi-Rabbil-falaq

Say: 'I seek safety and
protection in the Lord of
the dawn

مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ
Min sharri mā khalaq

from the evil of the things
He created,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ
Wa-min sharri ghasiqin
idha waqab

from the evil of the
darkness when it is very
strong

وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ
Wa-min sharrin-naffathati
fi l-uqad

from the evil of people
who practise witchcraft,

وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ
Wa-min sharri ḥasidin
idha ḥasad

and from the evil of the
envious one when he
envies'.

Chapter (114). **The people (Al-Nās)**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Bismillāhīr-Rahmanir-Rahīm

In the name of Allah,
the Most Gracious, the
Most Merciful

قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ
Qul A'ūdhu bi-Rabbīn-nās

Say: 'I seek refuge and
protection in the Lord of
all people,

مَلِكِ النَّاسِ
Malikin-nās

the King of all people,

إِلَهِ النَّاسِ
Ilāhin-nās

the God of all
people,

مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
Min sharri-waswasi-
khannas

from the evil of those
who whisper secretly,

الَّذِي يُنْشِئُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ

*Al-ladhi yuwaswisu fi
sudūrin-nās*

who whisper (evil) into
the hearts of people

مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

Min al-jinnati wan-nās

from (those evil ones of)
the jinn and the people

I HAVE NOT CREATED JINN AND
MANICED FOR ANY OTHER
PURPOSE EXCEPT TO WORSHIP ME

Hajj Quran 21:56

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO PRAYER

• FOR BEGINNERS •

SATOU AL-TOMI

This guide we hope will assist you towards understanding the meaning of Prayer, its form and significance as well as learning how to perform it. Once you have accepted your obligations as a Muslim, your concern must be to purify and develop both your heart and your behaviour. This is a continuous and life-long process and one in which Prayer plays a key role. Muslims are required to learn and recite Prayers in Arabic and though at first it may look substantial in reality the extent of what has to be remembered is little as there is considerable repetition throughout the Prayer. This book accompanied by a 60-minute tape is designed as a simple aid for you as you embark on your spiritual journey.

The New Muslims Project

In its concern to address the social and educational needs of those new to Islam the New Muslims Project of the Islamic Foundation, Maitland, Leicestershire has grown to provide a range of services. Through Meeting Point, the newsletter of the New Muslim Project, regular contact is maintained with over 2000 converts, as well as those interested in Islam, throughout the UK. Qur'anic Arabic courses are offered at various levels to encourage greater understanding of the Qur'an and Islam. Pilgrimage both Umra and Hajj have been organized for their historical and spiritual impact. As well as fulfilling a recognized role in advice and counselling the latest addition to the New Muslim Project's expanding services are its Website and with the kind assistance of Mountain of Light, this simple guide to Prayer for beginners. If you are or you know of someone new to Islam and would like to know more about the Project or access the range of services available, please do not hesitate to contact us at:



Islamic Foundation
100 Westbourne Grove
Leeds LS2 3PL
Tel: 0113 2369671
Fax: 0113 2369687
E-mail: info@newmuslims.org
Web: www.newmuslims.org



Mountain of Light, a sister of
Mountain of Light
Project, Tahir
100 Westbourne Grove
Leeds LS2 3PL
Tel: 0113 2369671
Fax: 0113 2369687
E-mail: info@mountainoflight.org
Web: www.mountainoflight.org